

Message Text

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, UNGA, RQ, CU
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH CUBAN PERM REP ON PUERTO RICO

REF: USUN 3399

1. AMBASSADOR YOUNG ACCOMPANIED BY MISOFF MET WITH CUBAN AMBASSADOR RAUL ROA KOURI AND VICE-MINISTER RICARDO ALARCON IN THE INDONESIAN LOUNGE OF THE UN SEPTEMBER 6 TO DISCUSS PUERTO RICO ISSUE.

2. AMBASSADOR YOUNG BEGAN THE MEETING BY ASKING HOW THE CUBANS SAW THE SITUATION CONCERNING PUERTO RICO IN THE COMMITTEE OF 24. ROA RESPONDED BY SAYING THAT HE HAD INFORMED PRESIDENT CASTRO OF HIS CONVERSATION WITH AMB. YOUNG BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE FOR CUBA. THEY HAD DISCUSSED THE MATTER AT SOME LENGTH, BUT HAD DECIDED THEY COULD NOT CHANGE CUBA'S POSITION. CASTRO HAD ASKED HIM TO INFORM YOUNG THAT CUBA'S POSITION WAS BASED UPON PRINCIPLE, AND HAD BEEN A MATTER OF RECORD EVER SINCE THE ISSUE HAD BEEN BROUGHT TO THE UNITED NATIONS. HE APPRECIATED THE ROLE THAT AMBASSADOR YOUNG HAD BEEN CARRYING OUT IN THE UNITED NATIONS AND IN U.S. POLITICS. CUBA'S INABILITY TO ACCOMMODATE THE U.S. ON PUERTO RICO WAS NOT
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INTENDED AS DISRESPECT FOR HIM OR FOR PRESIDENT CARTER.

3. AMBASSADOR YOUNG DESCRIBED U.S. PROBLEM OVER THE UNITED NATIONS AND CUBAN INVOLVEMENT WITH THE PUERTO RICAN ISSUE. THIS INVOLVEMENT WAS A PROBLEM BECAUSE PUERTO RICO WAS A PART OF THE UNITED STATES POLITICAL PROCESS. WE EXPLAINED THAT WE CONSIDERED THE CUBAN RESOLU-

TION UNBALANCED IN THAT IT DID NOT INCLUDE THE STATEHOOD OPTION. THE USG POSITION INCLUDED RESPECT FOR ALL SIGNIFICANT PUERTO RICAN POLITICAL GROUPS. ROA RESPONDED THAT THE CUBANS DID NOT ACCEPT STATEHOOD UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS AS A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE. HE ADDED THAT INTEGRATION OF PUERTO RICO INTO THE U.S. WOULD CAUSE STRONG ADVERSE REACTION THROUGHOUT MUCH OF LATIN AMERICA. EVEN VENEZUELA WOULD OBJECT. STATEHOOD WOULD MEAN EVENTUAL DESTRUCTION OF PUERTO RICO'S LATIN CULTURE. HE FELT THAT A MAJORITY OF PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE ALSO OPPOSED STATEHOOD, AND CITED THE 1967 REFERENDUM AS EVIDENCE.

4. AMBASSADOR YOUNG COMMENTED THAT ALL PUERTO RICAN GROUPS APPEARED TO BE USING THE COMMITTEE TO ADVANCE THEIR OWN PARTICULAR POLITICAL INTERESTS. THE STATEHOOD PEOPLE SAW THIS AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO MOVE MORE RAPIDLY TOWARD STATEHOOD, AND AS THE GOVERNOR FAVORED THIS OPTION THE STATEHOODERS WERE IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT IN PUERTO RICO. FOCUS ON THE ISSUE, THEREFORE, BY THE UN MIGHT PRECIPITATE A MOVE TOWARD STATEHOOD. THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WAS BEING EXTREMELY CAREFUL NOT TO SHOW PREFERENCE FOR ANY GROUP. IT WOULD ACCEPT ANY DECISION THAT THE PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE MIGHT MAKE CONCERNING THEIR COUNTRY'S FUTURE STATUS.

5. ROA SAID THAT HE DOUBTED THAT A RESOLUTION WOULD
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BE VOTED ON IN C-24 TODAY (SEPT. 6) BECAUSE HE UNDERSTOOD SOME AMENDMENTS WOULD BE PROPOSED AND DISCUSSED.

6. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THE CUBANS APPEAR TO STAND FIRMLY BY THEIR POSITION THAT A RESOLUTION SHOULD FAVOR SELF-DETERMINATION AND INDEPENDENCE, ROA GAVE NO INDICATION THAT THEY WOULD OPPOSE ATTEMPTS TO AMEND THE RESOLUTION. IF THEY RECOGNIZE THAT THE ONLY WAY OF GETTING THE RESOLUTION APPROVED WOULD BE TO ACCEPT MORE MODERATE LANGUAGE, PERHAPS A REFERENCE TO STATEHOOD AS AN OPTION, THEY MIGHT GO ALONG WITH THE CHANGES. WE NOTE THAT C-24 CHAIRMAN SALIM (SEPTEL) SAID THE CUBANS WOULD SETTLE FOR A SHORT RESOLUTION. YOUNG

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